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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

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June 23, 1988

Mr. Robert M. Gates
 Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
 Central Intelligence Agency
 Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. Gates:

I am planning to conduct a set of hearings during the week of July 11, 1988 on the impact that General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's reform movement has had upon the Soviet military. I would like to invite you, as well as your colleagues in the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, to appear separately before the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee.

The role of the military is clearly critical to Gorbachev's effort to restructure the Soviet system. Gorbachev must have the support of the military to pursue his arms control objectives and implement "new thinking" in foreign policy. He must also reduce the burden of defense expenditures on the Soviet economy for perestroika to succeed fully.

Much analytic attention has been paid to Gorbachev's personnel changes in the ranks of senior military officers and the emerging debate on military doctrine. The Defense Policy Panel, however, would like to examine the policy and operational impact that Gorbachev has had upon the military. Specifically, we would like you to address two general questions:

What, if any, have been the concrete and operational manifestations in Soviet military behavior that might be attributable to Gorbachev's reform campaign? Have changes in Soviet declaratory policy, such as "reasonable sufficiency" and "defensive defense," been reflected in Soviet procurement, deployment and training practices?

What kind of operational changes in Soviet military behavior, in your view, would convincingly demonstrate that Gorbachev's reforms had taken hold in the Soviet military? For example, how would the Soviet military's embrace of Gorbachev's "new thinking" in military doctrine be reflected in budgetary and deployment changes?

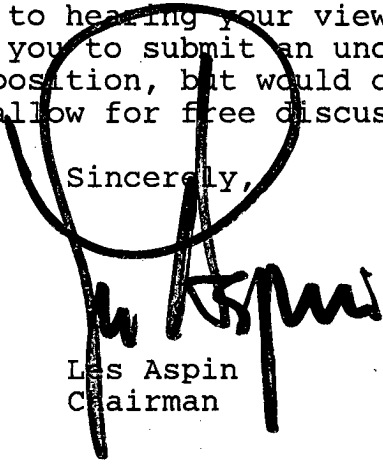
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Understanding the interaction between the Soviet Union's declared strategy and operational military policy has always been important, but becomes more so during a period of evident change. I look forward to hearing your views on these critical matters. We would like you to submit an unclassified statement outlining your general position, but would conduct the hearing in a closed session to allow for free discussion.

Sincerely,


Les Aspin
Chairman

LA/cmb